

## ATTACHMENT 3

Dear Neighbors,

As many of you may have read in this week's *Leesburg Today*, on August 8 the Purcellville Town Council announced its intention to potentially acquire or condemn through eminent domain 40+ acres of Fields Farm for the purpose of developing additional wells to augment the town's water supplies. The 40+ acres just happen to be vital to building the proposed high school on Fields Farm. The next day, August 9, Mayor Lazaro sent a letter to 2,600 Purcellville residents announcing the Council's intention and scheduling a public hearing on the potential acquisition/condemnation on Tuesday, September 12.

In his letter, Mayor Lazaro refers to a Water Resources Study that the town commissioned in 1999 and formally adopted in 2000. The study indicates that the town must expand its water resources in order to meet the expected demand for water in the year 2050 and offers three options to achieve that goal; expand the Hirst Reservoir, develop additional wells, and consider drawing water from Sleeter Lake south of Round Hill.

Mayor Lazaro states the following in his letter: "In 2000 when Loudoun County purchased the Fields Farm property the town objected in part to the development of the property *as it is cited in the study* as having the potential to yield water resources." (emphasis added)

I have obtained a copy of the study from the town staff and have examined it very carefully. **There is no mention of Fields Farm anywhere in the document.**

The section dealing with future wells analyzes in great detail six areas for their potential to provide additional wells to augment the three wells the town now has. Two of the areas, the Urban Growth Area south of town and all property within the town limits, are recommended for no further consideration because of water quality problems and the potential to draw down existing residential wells in the area. The remaining four areas are ranked one through four in priority for their potential to provide additional water for the town.

According to the study, the most preferred area for new wells is the area around Short Hill Mountain northwest of town, including property owned by former Mayor John Marsh. In fact the study comments that the highest yielding test well in the entire study (250 gallons per minute) was found on the Marsh property. The second most preferred area lies along the path of the main water line that runs between the Hirst Reservoir (west of Hillsboro near the Jefferson County, West Virginia border) and the town's water treatment facility near Short Hill Mountain. The third most preferred area is the 1,220 acres that the town owns surrounding its Hirst Reservoir. The *least* preferred area for new wells is the *entire* Urban Growth Area north of town. The study absolutely does not

mention any property in the UGA by name; however, this area contains the Fields Farm, the Autumn Hill property, the Wright Farm subdivision, and several other properties.

After reading the town's own study, it appears to me that if the Town Council is truly interested in expanding its water resources, it would pursue one of the top two priority areas, since several wells in these two areas could quite possibly lead to an ample water supply well into the town's future. Instead, the Council has chosen the option *least* preferred by its consultants, one that is almost guaranteed to produce another confrontation with the Board of Supervisors and the School Board. Despite claims to the contrary in the press by Mayor Lazaro, this action appears to have more to do with providing another obstacle to the building of the high school on Fields Farm than it does with providing additional water resources for the town.

In the spirit of cooperation and in an effort to stabilize the town's water future, I would be willing to give to Purcellville, free of charge, the 40 acres they are seeking in exchange for the town providing central water and sewer service to Fields Farm to service the new high school, Mountain View Elementary School, and the Upper Loudoun Youth Football stadium. When the Board of Supervisors returns from summer break on September 5, I will ask my colleagues if they are willing to make such an offer.

The County purchased the Fields Farm for a public purpose. While determining whether or not the town can condemn the property for another public purpose is an interesting legal question (and one I suspect the town would lose), I certainly hope that it doesn't become necessary to spend additional taxpayers dollars in court to discover the answer, especially when there is a potentially less expensive, more viable, and more amicable resolution available for the town's water resource problem.

As always, I look forward to your input and thoughts on this new turn of events.

Best regards,

Jim Burton